

Congresswoman Kaptur today announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture has approved assistance to eligible farm operators throughout the Ninth Congressional District, including Lucas, Ottawa, Erie and Lorain counties, as a result of a series of natural disasters earlier this year.

Congresswoman Kaptur said Lucas, Ottawa and Lorain counties were designated primary disaster areas and Erie County was named a contiguous disaster county.

"This designation makes farm operators throughout the Ninth District eligible to be considered for assistance if they meet the requirements," Kaptur said.

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Thomas J. Vilsack said production losses in 41 Ohio counties warranted the disaster declaration due to the combined effects of varying periods of excess rain and drought, tornadoes and high winds, flooding, flash flooding, hail and freeze and frost during the period of April 1-August 3. An additional 38 Ohio counties were named contiguous disaster counties.

Possible assistance includes Farm Service Agency emergency loans and Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE).

Farmers in the designated counties will have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for emergency loan assistance. FSA will consider each emergency loan on its own merits, taking into account the extent of production losses, security available, and repayment ability.

SURE program applications for 2010 crop losses will be accepted in 2011 when the 2010 farm revenue data becomes available.

Kaptur, a member of the House Appropriations agriculture subcommittee, noted that one in seven Ohioans is employed in the food and agriculture industry.

She said the industry contributes almost \$100 billion a year to the state's economy. Ohio's top commodities include soybeans, corn, wheat, eggs, tomatoes and cucumbers.

Kaptur said farmers should contact their local FSA office for more information or go online to <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>

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